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# Decolonization is not a metaphor

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**Abstract**
Our goal in this article is to remind readers what is unsettling about decolonization. Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. The easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship, evidenced by the increasing number of calls to "decolonize our schools," or use "decolonizing methods," or, "decolonize student thinking", turns decolonization into a metaphor. As important as their goals may be, social justice, critical methodologies, or approaches that decenter settler perspectives have objectives that may be incommensurable with decolonization. Because settler colonialism is built upon an entangled triad structure of settler-native-slave, the decolonial desires of white, non-white, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people, can similarly be entangled in resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further settler colonialism. The metaphorization of decolonization makes possible a set of evasions, or "settler moves to innocence", that problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity. In this article, we analyze multiple settler moves towards innocence in order to forward "an ethic of incommensurability" that recognizes what is distinct and what is sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects. We also point to unsettling themes within transnational/Third World decolonizations, abolition, and critical space-place pedagogies, which challenge the coalescence of social justice endeavors, making room for more meaningful potential alliances.

**Keywords:** *decolonization, settler colonialism, settler moves to innocence, incommensurability, Indigenous land, decolonizing education*

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> Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a program of complete disorder. But it cannot come as a result of magical practices, nor of a natural shock, nor of a friendly understanding. Decolonization, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content.
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> *-Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 1963, p. 36*

> Let us admit it, the settler knows perfectly well that no phraseology can be a substitute for reality.
>
> *-Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 1963, p. 45*

## Introduction

For the past several years we have been working, in our writing and teaching, to bring attention to how settler colonialism has shaped schooling and educational research in the United States and other settler colonial nation-states. These are two distinct but overlapping tasks, the first concerned with how the invisibilized dynamics of settler colonialism mark the organization, governance, curricula, and assessment of compulsory learning, the other concerned with how settler perspectives and worldviews get to count as knowledge and research and how these perspectives - repackaged as data and findings - are activated in order to rationalize and maintain unfair social structures. We are doing this work alongside many others who - somewhat relentlessly, in writings, meetings, courses, and activism - don't allow the real and symbolic violences of settler colonialism to be overlooked.

Alongside this work, we have been thinking about what decolonization means, what it wants and requires. One trend we have noticed, with growing apprehension, is the ease with which the language of decolonization has been superficially adopted into education and other social sciences, supplanting prior ways of talking about social justice, critical methodologies, or approaches which decenter settler perspectives. Decolonization, which we assert is a distinct project from other civil and human rights-based social justice projects, is far too often subsumed into the directives of these projects, with no regard for how decolonization wants something different than those forms of justice. Settler scholars swap out prior civil and human rights based terms, seemingly to signal both an awareness of the significance of Indigenous and decolonizing theorizations of schooling and educational research, and to include Indigenous peoples on the list of considerations - as an additional special (ethnic) group or class. At a conference on educational research, it is not uncommon to hear speakers refer, almost casually, to the need to "decolonize our schools," or use "decolonizing methods," or "decolonize student thinking." Yet, we have observed a startling number of these discussions make no mention of Indigenous

peoples, our/their[1] struggles for the recognition of our/their sovereignty, or the contributions of Indigenous intellectuals and activists to theories and frameworks of decolonization. Further, there is often little recognition given to the immediate context of settler colonialism on the North American lands where many of these conferences take place.

Of course, dressing up in the language of decolonization is not as offensive as "Navajo print" underwear sold at a clothing chain store (Gaynor, 2012) and other appropriations of Indigenous cultures and materials that occur so frequently. Yet, this kind of inclusion is a form of enclosure, dangerous in how it domesticates decolonization. It is also a foreclosure, limiting in how it recapitulates dominant theories of social change. On the occasion of the inaugural issue of *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, & Society*, we want to be sure to clarify that decolonization is not a metaphor. When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future. Decolonize (a verb) and decolonization (a noun) cannot easily be grafted onto pre-existing discourses/frameworks, even if they are critical, even if they are anti-racist, even if they are justice frameworks. The easy absorption, adoption, and transposing of decolonization is yet another form of settler appropriation. When we write about decolonization, we are not offering it as a metaphor; it is not an approximation of other experiences of oppression. Decolonization is not a swappable term for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools. Decolonization doesn't have a synonym.

Our goal in this essay is to remind readers what is unsettling about decolonization - what is unsettling and what should be unsettling. Clearly, we are advocates for the analysis of settler colonialism within education and education research and we position the work of Indigenous thinkers as central in unlocking the confounding aspects of public schooling. We, at least in part, want others to join us in these efforts, so that settler colonial structuring and Indigenous critiques of that structuring are no longer rendered invisible. Yet, this joining cannot be too easy, too open, too settled. Solidarity is an uneasy, reserved, and unsettled matter that neither reconciles present grievances nor forecloses future conflict. There are parts of the decolonization project that are not easily absorbed by human rights or civil rights based approaches to educational equity. In this essay, we think about what decolonization wants.

There is a long and bumbled history of non-Indigenous peoples making moves to alleviate the impacts of colonization. The too-easy adoption of decolonizing discourse (making decolonization a metaphor) is just one part of that history and it taps into pre-existing tropes that get in the way of more meaningful potential alliances. We think of the enactment of these tropes as a series of *moves to innocence* (Malwhinney, 1998), which problematically attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity. Here, to explain why decolonization is and requires more than a metaphor, we discuss some of these moves to innocence:

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[1] As an Indigenous scholar and a settler/trespasser/scholar writing together, we have used forward slashes to reflect our discrepant positionings in our pronouns throughout this essay.

i. Settler nativism
ii. Fantasizing adoption
iii. Colonial equivocation
iv. Conscientization
v. At risk-ing / Asterisk-ing Indigenous peoples
vi. Re-occupation and urban homesteading

Such moves ultimately represent settler fantasies of easier paths to reconciliation. Actually, we argue, attending to what is irreconcilable within settler colonial relations and what is incommensurable between decolonizing projects and other social justice projects will help to reduce the frustration of attempts at solidarity; but the attention won't get anyone off the hook from the hard, unsettling work of decolonization. Thus, we also include a discussion of interruptions that unsettle innocence and recognize incommensurability.

## The set of settler colonial relations

Generally speaking, postcolonial theories and theories of coloniality attend to two forms of colonialism[2]. *External colonialism* (also called exogenous or exploitation colonization) denotes the expropriation of fragments of Indigenous worlds, animals, plants and human beings, extracting them in order to transport them to - and build the wealth, the privilege, or feed the appetites of - the colonizers, who get marked as the first world. This includes so-thought 'historic' examples such as opium, spices, tea, sugar, and tobacco, the extraction of which continues to fuel colonial efforts. This form of colonialism also includes the feeding of contemporary appetites for diamonds, fish, water, oil, humans turned workers, genetic material, cadmium and other essential minerals for high tech devices. External colonialism often requires a subset of activities properly called military colonialism - the creation of war fronts/frontiers against enemies to be conquered, and the enlistment of foreign land, resources, and people into military operations. In external colonialism, all things Native become recast as 'natural resources' - bodies and earth for war, bodies and earth for chattel.

The other form of colonialism that is attended to by postcolonial theories and theories of coloniality is *internal colonialism*, the biopolitical and geopolitical management of people, land, flora and fauna within the "domestic" borders of the imperial nation. This involves the use of

[2] Colonialism is not just a symptom of capitalism. Socialist and communist empires have also been settler empires (e.g. Chinese colonialism in Tibet). "In other words," writes Sandy Grande, "both Marxists and capitalists view land and natural resources as commodities to be exploited, in the first instance, by capitalists for personal gain, and in the second by Marxists for the good of all" (2004, p.27). Capitalism and the state are technologies of colonialism, developed over time to further colonial projects. Racism is an invention of colonialism (Silva, 2007). The current colonial era goes back to 1492, when colonial imaginary goes global.

particularized modes of control - prisons, ghettos, minoritizing, schooling, policing - to ensure the ascendancy of a nation and its white[3] elite. These modes of control, imprisonment, and involuntary transport of the human beings across borders - ghettos, their policing, their economic divestiture, and their dislocatability - are at work to authorize the metropole and conscribe her periphery. Strategies of internal colonialism, such as segregation, divestment, surveillance, and criminalization, are both structural and interpersonal.

Our intention in this descriptive exercise is not be exhaustive, or even inarguable; instead, we wish to emphasize that (a) decolonization will take a different shape in each of these contexts - though they can overlap[4] - and that (b) neither external nor internal colonialism adequately describe the form of colonialism which operates in the United States or other nation-states in which the colonizer comes to stay. *Settler colonialism* operates through internal/external colonial modes simultaneously because there is no spatial separation between metropole and colony. For example, in the United States, many Indigenous peoples have been forcibly removed from their homelands onto reservations, indentured, and abducted into state custody, signaling the form of colonization as simultaneously internal (via boarding schools and other biopolitical modes of control) and external (via uranium mining on Indigenous land in the US Southwest and oil extraction on Indigenous land in Alaska) with a frontier (the US military still nicknames all enemy territory "Indian Country"). The horizons of the settler colonial nation-state are total and require a mode of total appropriation of Indigenous life and land, rather than the selective expropriation of profit-producing fragments.

Settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain. Thus, relying solely on postcolonial literatures or theories of coloniality that ignore settler colonialism will not help to envision the shape that decolonization must take in settler colonial contexts. Within settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand, in this article.) Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporally contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation. This is why Patrick Wolfe (1999) emphasizes that settler colonialism is a structure and not an event. In the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property. Epistemological, ontological, and cosmological relationships to land are interred, indeed made pre-modern and backward. Made savage.

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[3] In using terms as "white" and "whiteness", we are acknowledging that whiteness extends beyond phenotype.

[4] We don't treat internal/external as a taxonomy of colonialisms. They describe two operative modes of colonialism. The modes can overlap, reinforce, and contradict one another, and do so through particular legal, social, economic and political processes that are context specific.

In order for the settlers to make a place their home, they must destroy and disappear the Indigenous peoples that live there. Indigenous peoples are those who have creation stories, not colonization stories, about how we/they came to be in a particular place - indeed how we/they came to *be a place*. Our/their relationships to land comprise our/their epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies. For the settlers, Indigenous peoples are in the way and, in the destruction of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous communities, and over time and through law and policy, Indigenous peoples' claims to land under settler regimes, land is recast as property and as a resource. Indigenous peoples must be erased, must be made into ghosts (Tuck and Ree, forthcoming).

At the same time, settler colonialism involves the subjugation and forced labor of chattel slaves[5], whose bodies and lives become the property, and who are kept landless. Slavery in settler colonial contexts is distinct from other forms of indenture whereby *excess labor* is extracted from persons. First, chattels are commodities of labor and therefore it is the slave's *person* that is the excess. Second, unlike workers who may aspire to own land, the slave's very presence on the land is already an excess that must be dis-located. Thus, the slave is a desirable commodity but the person underneath is imprisonable, punishable, and murderable. The violence of keeping/killing the chattel slave makes them deathlike monsters in the settler imagination; they are reconfigured/disfigured as the threat, the razor's edge of safety and terror.

The settler, if known by his actions and how he justifies them, sees himself as holding dominion over the earth and its flora and fauna, as the anthropocentric normal, and as more developed, more human, more deserving than other groups or species. The settler is making a new "home" and that home is rooted in a homesteading worldview where the wild land and wild people were made for his benefit. He can only make his identity as a settler by making the land produce, and produce excessively, because "civilization" is defined as production in excess of the "natural" world (i.e. in excess of the sustainable production already present in the Indigenous world). In order for excess production, he needs excess labor, which he cannot provide himself. The chattel slave serves as that excess labor, labor that can never be paid because payment would have to be in the form of property (land). The settler's wealth is land, or a fungible version of it, and so payment for labor is impossible.[6] The settler positions himself as both superior and normal; the settler is natural, whereas the Indigenous inhabitant and the chattel slave are unnatural, even supernatural.

Settlers are not immigrants. Immigrants are beholden to the Indigenous laws and epistemologies of the lands they migrate to. Settlers become the law, supplanting Indigenous

[5] As observed by Erica Neeganagwedgin (2012), these two groups are not always distinct. Neeganagwedgin presents a history of the enslavement of Indigenous peoples in Canada as chattel slaves. In California, Mexico, and the U.S. Southwest under the Spanish mission system, Indigenous people were removed from their land and also made into chattel slaves. Under U.S. colonization, California law stipulated that Indians could be murdered and/or indentured by any "person" (white, propertied, citizen). These laws remained in effect until 1937.

[6] See Kate McCoy (forthcoming) on settler crises in early Jamestown, Virginia to pay indentured European labor with land.

laws and epistemologies. Therefore, settler nations are not immigrant nations (See also A.J. Barker, 2009).

Not unique, the United States, as a settler colonial nation-state, also operates as an empire - utilizing external forms and internal forms of colonization simultaneous to the settler colonial project. This means, and this is perplexing to some, that dispossessed people are brought onto seized Indigenous land through other colonial projects. Other colonial projects include enslavement, as discussed, but also military recruitment, low-wage and high-wage labor recruitment (such as agricultural workers and overseas-trained engineers), and displacement/migration (such as the coerced immigration from nations torn by U.S. wars or devastated by U.S. economic policy). In this set of settler colonial relations, colonial subjects who are displaced by external colonialism, as well as racialized and minoritized by internal colonialism, still occupy and settle stolen Indigenous land. Settlers are diverse, not just of white European descent, and include people of color, even from other colonial contexts. This tightly wound set of conditions and racialized, globalized relations exponentially complicates what is meant by decolonization, and by solidarity, against settler colonial forces.

Decolonization in exploitative colonial situations could involve the seizing of imperial wealth by the postcolonial subject. In settler colonial situations, seizing imperial wealth is inextricably tied to settlement and re-invasion. Likewise, the promise of integration and civil rights is predicated on securing a share of a settler-appropriated wealth (as well as expropriated 'third-world' wealth). Decolonization in a settler context is fraught because empire, settlement, and internal colony have no spatial separation. Each of these features of settler colonialism in the US context - empire, settlement, and internal colony - make it a site of contradictory decolonial desires[7].

Decolonization as metaphor allows people to equivocate these contradictory decolonial desires because it turns decolonization into an empty signifier to be filled by any track towards liberation. In reality, the tracks walk all over land/people in settler contexts. Though the details are not fixed or agreed upon, in our view, decolonization in the settler colonial context must involve the repatriation of land simultaneous to the recognition of how land and relations to land have always already been differently understood and enacted; that is, *all* of the land, and not just symbolically. This is precisely why decolonization is necessarily unsettling, especially across lines of solidarity. "Decolonization never takes place unnoticed" (Fanon, 1963, p. 36). Settler colonialism and its decolonization implicates and unsettles everyone.

[7] Decolonization is further fraught because, although the setter-native-slave triad structures settler colonialism, this does not mean that settler, native, and slave are analogs that can be used to describe corresponding identities, structural locations, worldviews, and behaviors. Nor do they mutually constitute one another. For example, Indigenous is an identity independent of the triad, and also an ascribed structural location within the triad. Chattel slave is an ascribed structural position, but not an identity. Settler describes a set of behaviors, as well as a structural location, but is eschewed as an identity.

*Playing Indian and the erasure of Indigenous peoples*

Recently in a symposium on the significance of Liberal Arts education in the United States, Eve presented an argument that Liberal Arts education has historically excluded any attention to or analysis of settler colonialism. This, Eve posited, makes Liberal Arts education complicit in the project of settler colonialism and, more so, has rendered the truer project of Liberal Arts education something like trying to make the settler indigenous to the land he occupies. The attendees were titillated by this idea, nodding and murmuring in approval and it was then that Eve realized that she was trying to say something incommensurable with what they expected her to say. She was completely misunderstood. Many in the audience heard this observation: that the work of Liberal Arts education is in part to teach settlers to be indigenous, as something admirable, worthwhile, something wholesome, not as a problematic point of evidence about the reach of the settler colonial erasure.

Philip Deloria (1998) explores how and why the settler wants to be made indigenous, even if only through disguise, or other forms of *playing Indian*. Playing Indian is a powerful U.S. pastime, from the Boston Tea Party, to fraternal organizations, to new age trends, to even those aforementioned Native print underwear. Deloria maintains that, "From the colonial period to the present, the Indian has skulked in and out of the most important stories various Americans have told about themselves" (p. 5).

> The indeterminacy of American identities stems, in part, from the nation's inability to deal with Indian people. Americans wanted to feel a natural affinity with the continent, and it was Indians who could teach them such aboriginal closeness. Yet, in order to control the landscape they had to destroy the original inhabitants. (Deloria, 1998, p.5)

L. Frank Baum (author of *The Wizard of Oz*) famously asserted in 1890 that the safety of white settlers was only guaranteed by the "total annihilation of the few remaining Indians" (as quoted in Hastings, 2007). D.H. Lawrence, reading James Fenimore Cooper (discussed at length later in this article), Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman and others for his *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1924), describes Americans' fascination with Indigeneity as one of simultaneous desire and repulsion (Deloria, 1998).

> "No place," Lawrence observed, "exerts its full influence upon a newcomer until the old inhabitant is dead or absorbed." Lawrence argued that in order to meet the "demon of the continent" head on and this finalize the "unexpressed spirit of America," white Americans needed either to destroy Indians of assimilate them into a white American world...both aimed at making Indians vanish from the landscape. (Lawrence, as quoted in Deloria, 1998, p. 4).

Everything within a settler colonial society strains to destroy or assimilate the Native in order to disappear them from the land - this is how a society can have multiple simultaneous and conflicting messages about Indigenous peoples, such as all Indians are dead, located in faraway reservations, that contemporary Indigenous people are less indigenous than prior generations, and that all Americans are a "little bit Indian." These desires to erase - to let time do its thing and wait for the older form of living to die out, or to even help speed things along (euthanize) because the death of pre-modern ways of life is thought to be inevitable - these are all desires for another kind of resolve to the colonial situation, resolved through the absolute and total destruction or assimilation of original inhabitants.

Numerous scholars have observed that Indigeneity prompts multiple forms of settler anxiety, even if only because the presence of Indigenous peoples - who make *a priori* claims to land and ways of being - is a constant reminder that the settler colonial project is incomplete (Fanon, 1963; Vine Deloria, 1988; Grande, 2004; Bruyneel, 2007). The easy adoption of decolonization as a metaphor (and nothing else) is a form of this anxiety, because it is a premature attempt at reconciliation. The absorption of decolonization by settler social justice frameworks is one way the settler, disturbed by her own settler status, tries to escape or contain the unbearable searchlight of complicity, of having harmed others just by being one's self. The desire to reconcile is just as relentless as the desire to disappear the Native; it is a desire to not have to deal with this (Indian) problem anymore.

## Settler moves to innocence

We observe that another component of a desire to play Indian is a settler desire to be made innocent, to find some mercy or relief in face of the relentlessness of settler guilt and haunting (see Tuck and Ree, forthcoming, on mercy and haunting). Directly and indirectly benefitting from the erasure and assimilation of Indigenous peoples is a difficult reality for settlers to accept. The weight of this reality is uncomfortable; the misery of guilt makes one hurry toward any reprieve. In her 1998 Master's thesis, Janet Mawhinney analyzed the ways in which white people maintained and (re)produced white privilege in self-defined anti-racist settings and organizations.[8] She examined the role of storytelling and self-confession - which serves to equate stories of personal exclusion with stories of structural racism and exclusion - and what she terms 'moves to innocence,' or "strategies to remove involvement in and culpability for systems of domination" (p. 17). Mawhinney builds upon Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack's (1998) conceptualization of, 'the race to innocence', "the process through which a woman comes to believe her own claim of subordination is the most urgent, and that she is unimplicated in the subordination of other women" (p. 335).

Mawhinney's thesis theorizes the self-positioning of white people as simultaneously the oppressed and never an oppressor, and as having an *absence of experience* of oppressive power

[8] Thank you to Neoma Mullens for introducing Eve to Mawhinney's concept of moves to innocence.

relations (p. 100). This simultaneous self-positioning afforded white people in various purportedly anti-racist settings to say to people of color, "I don't experience the problems you do, so I don't think about it," and "tell me what to do, you're the experts here" (p. 103). "The commonsense appeal of such statements," Malwhinney observes, enables white speakers to "utter them sanguine in [their] appearance of equanimity, is rooted in the normalization of a liberal analysis of power relations" (ibid.).

In the discussion that follows, we will do some work to identify and argue against a series of what we call 'settler moves to innocence'. Settler moves to innocence are those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all. In fact, settler scholars may gain professional kudos or a boost in their reputations for being so sensitive or self-aware. Yet settler moves to innocence are hollow, they only serve the settler. This discussion will likely cause discomfort in our settler readers, may embarrass you/us or make us/you feel implicated. Because of the racialized flights and flows of settler colonial empire described above, settlers are diverse - there are white settlers and brown settlers, and peoples in both groups make moves to innocence that attempt to deny and deflect their own complicity in settler colonialism. When it makes sense to do so, we attend to moves to innocence enacted differently by white people and by brown and Black people.

In describing settler moves to innocence, our goal is to provide a framework of excuses, distractions, and diversions from decolonization. We discuss some of the moves to innocence at greater length than others, mostly because some require less explanation and because others are more central to our initial argument for the demetaphorization of decolonization. We provide this framework so that we can be more impatient with each other, less likely to accept gestures and half-steps, and more willing to press for acts which unsettle innocence, which we discuss in the final section of this article.

### *Moves to innocence I: Settler nativism*

In this move to innocence, settlers locate or invent a long-lost ancestor who is rumored to have had "Indian blood," and they use this claim to mark themselves as blameless in the attempted eradications of Indigenous peoples. There are numerous examples of public figures in the United States who "remember" a distant Native ancestor, including Nancy Reagan (who is said to be a descendant of Pocahontas) and, more recently, Elizabeth Warren[9] and many others, illustrating how commonplace settler nativism is. Vine Deloria Jr. discusses what he calls the Indian-grandmother complex in the following account from *Custer Died for Your Sins*:

[9] See Francie Latour's interview (June 1 2012) with Kim Tallbear for more information on the Elizabeth Warren example. In the interview, Tallbear asserts that Warren's romanticized claims and the accusations of fraud are evidence of ways in which people in the U.S. misunderstand Native American identity. Tallbear insists that to understand Native American identity, "you need to get outside of that binary, one-drop framework."

> During my three years as Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians it was a rare day when some white [person] didn't visit my office and proudly proclaim that he or she was of Indian descent...
>
> At times I became quite defensive about being a Sioux when these white people had a pedigree that was so much more respectable than mine. But eventually I came to understand their need to identify as partially Indian and did not resent them. I would confirm their wildest stories about their Indian ancestry and would add a few tales of my own hoping that they would be able to accept themselves someday and leave us alone.
>
> Whites claiming Indian blood generally tend to reinforce mythical beliefs about Indians. All but one person I met who claimed Indian blood claimed it on their grandmother's side. I once did a projection backward and discovered that evidently most tribes were entirely female for the first three hundred years of white occupation. No one, it seemed, wanted to claim a male Indian as a forebear.
>
> It doesn't take much insight into racial attitudes to understand the real meaning of the Indian-grandmother complex that plagues certain white [people]. A male ancestor has too much of the aura of the savage warrior, the unknown primitive, the instinctive animal, to make him a respectable member of the family tree. But a young Indian princess? Ah, there was royalty for the taking. Somehow the white was linked with a noble house of gentility and culture if his grandmother was an Indian princess who ran away with an intrepid pioneer...
>
> While a real Indian grandmother is probably the nicest thing that could happen to a child, why is a remote Indian princess grandmother so necessary for many white [people]? Is it because they are afraid of being classed as foreigners? Do they need some blood tie with the frontier and its dangers in order to experience what it means to be an American? Or is it an attempt to avoid facing the guilt they bear for the treatment of the Indians? (1988, p. 2-4)

Settler nativism, or what Vine Deloria Jr. calls the Indian-grandmother complex, is a settler move to innocence because it is an attempt to deflect a settler identity, while continuing to enjoy settler privilege and occupying stolen land. Deloria observes that settler nativism is gendered and considers the reasons a storied Indian grandmother might have more appeal than an Indian grandfather. On one level, it can be expected that many settlers have an ancestor who was Indigenous and/or who was a chattel slave. This is precisely the habit of settler colonialism, which pushes humans into other human communities; strategies of rape and sexual violence, and also the ordinary attractions of human relationships, ensure that settlers have Indigenous and chattel slave ancestors.

Further, though race is a social construct, Indigenous peoples and chattel slaves, particularly slaves from the continent of Africa, were/are racialized differently in ways that support/ed the logics and aims of settler colonialism (the erasure of the Indigenous person and

the capture and containment of the slave). "Indians and Black people in the US have been racialized in opposing ways that reflect their antithetical roles in the formation of US society," Patrick Wolfe (2006) explains:

> Black people's enslavement produced an inclusive taxonomy that automatically enslaved the offspring of a slave and any other parent. In the wake of slavery, this taxonomy became fully racialized in the "one-drop rule," whereby any amount of African ancestry, no matter how remote, and regardless of phenotypical appearance, makes a person Black. (p. 387)

Kim Tallbear argues that the one-drop rule dominates understandings of race in the United States and, so, most people in the US have not been able to understand Indigenous identity (Latour, 2012). Through the one-drop rule, blackness in settler colonial contexts is *expansive*, ensuring that a slave/criminal status will be *inherited* by an expanding number of 'black' descendants. Yet, Indigenous peoples have been racialized in a profoundly different way. Native American-ness[10] is *subtractive*: Native Americans are constructed to become fewer in number and *less* Native, but never exactly white, over time. Our/their status as Indigenous peoples/first inhabitants is the basis of our/their land claims and the goal of settler colonialism is to diminish claims to land over generations (or sooner, if possible). That is, Native American is a racialization that portrays contemporary Indigenous generations to be less authentic, less Indigenous than every prior generation in order to ultimately phase out Indigenous claims to land and usher in settler claims to property. This is primarily done through blood quantum registries and policies, which were forced on Indigenous nations and communities and, in some cases, have overshadowed former ways of determining tribal membership.

Wolfe (2006) explains:

> For Indians, in stark contrast, non-Indian ancestry compromised their indigeneity, producing "half-breeds," a regime that persists in the form of blood quantum regulations. As opposed to enslaved people, whose reproduction augmented their owners' wealth, Indigenous people obstructed settlers' access to land, so their increase was counterproductive. In this way, the restrictive racial classification of Indians straightforwardly furthered the logic of elimination. (p. 387)

The racializations of Indigenous people and Black people in the US settler colonial nation-state are geared to ensure the ascendancy of white settlers as the true and rightful owners and occupiers of the land.

> In the national mythologies of such societies, it is believed that white people came first and that it is they who principally developed the land; Aboriginal peoples are presumed to be mostly dead or assimilated. European settlers thus *become* the

[10] Native American, then, can be a signifier for how Indigenous peoples (over 500 federally recognized tribes and nations in the U.S. alone) are racialized into one vanishing race in the U.S. settler-colonial context.

> original inhabitants and the group most entitled to the fruits of citizenship." (Razack, 2002, p. 1-2; emphasis original.)

In the racialization of whiteness, blood quantum rules are reversed so that white people can stay white, yet claim descendance from an Indian grandmother. In 1924, the Virginia legislature passed the Racial Integrity Act, which enforced the one-drop rule *except* for white people who claimed a distant Indian grandmother - the result of strong lobbying from the aristocratic "First Families of Virginia" who all claim to have descended from Pocahontas (including Nancy Reagan, born in 1921). Known as the Pocahontas Exception, this loophole allowed thousands of white people to claim Indian ancestry, while actual Indigenous people were reclassified as "colored" and disappeared off the public record[11].

Settler nativism, through the claiming of a long-lost ancestor, invests in these specific racializations of Indigenous people and Black people, and disbelieves the sovereign authority of Indigenous nations to determine tribal membership. Dakota scholar Kim Tallbear (in an interview on the recent Elizabeth Warren example), provides an account that echoes and updates Deloria's account. Speaking to the many versions of settler nativism she has encountered, in which people say,

> "My great-great grandmother was an Indian princess." [or] "I'm descended from Pocohantas." What Elizabeth Warren said about the high cheekbones, I've had so many people from across the political spectrum say things that strange or stranger. And my point is, maybe you do have some remote ancestor. So what? You don't just get to decide you're Cherokee if the community does not recognize you as such (as quoted in Latour, 2012).

Ancestry is different from tribal membership; Indigenous identity and tribal membership are questions that Indigenous communities alone have the right to struggle over and define, not DNA tests, heritage websites, and certainly not the settler state. Settler nativism is about imagining an Indian past and a settler future; in contrast, tribal sovereignty has provided for an Indigenous present and various Indigenous intellectuals theorize decolonization as Native futures without a settler state.

### *Moves to innocence II: Settler adoption fantasies*

Describing acts of passing, Sara Ahmed (2000) asserts the importance of being able to replace "the stranger", or take the place of the other, in the consolidation and (re)affirmation of white identity. To "become without becoming," is to reproduce "the other as 'not-I' *within* rather than *beyond* the structure of the 'I'" (p. 132). Sherene Razack, reading Ahmed, tells us that

[11] The 1940 Census only recorded 198 Indians in the State of Virginia. 6 out of 8 tribes in Virginia are currently unable to obtain federal recognition because of the racial erasure under the Racial Integrity Act (Fiske, 2004).

appropriating the other's pain occurs when, "we think we are recognizing not only the other's pain but his or her difference. Difference becomes the conduit of identification in much the same way as pain does" (Razack, 2007, p. 379). Discussing the film *Dances with Wolves* (a cinematic fiction of a Union soldier in the post-bellum Civil War era who befriends and protects the Lakota Sioux, who are represented as a noble, dying race), Ahmed critically engages the narrative, in which a white man (played by Kevin Costner) comes to respect the Sioux,

> to the point of being able to dance their dances...the white man in this example is able to 'to become without becoming' (Ahmed, 2000, p. 32)...He alone is transformed through his encounter with the Sioux, while they remain the mechanism for his transformation. He becomes the authentic knower while they remain what is to be known and consumed, and spit out again, as good Indians who confirm the white man's position as hero of the story...the Sioux remain objects, while Kevin Costner is able to go anywhere and be anything. (Ahmed's analysis, as discussed by Razack, 2007, p. 379).

For the purposes of this article, we locate the desire to *become without becoming [Indian]* within settler adoption fantasies. These fantasies can mean the adoption of Indigenous practices and knowledge, but more, refer to those narratives in the settler colonial imagination in which the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping. This is a fantasy that is invested in a settler futurity and dependent on the foreclosure of an Indigenous futurity.

Settler adoption fantasies are longstanding narratives in the United States, fueled by rare instances of ceremonial "adoptions", from John Smith's adoption in 1607 by Powhatan (Pocahontas' father), to Lewis Henry Morgan's adoption in 1847 by Seneca member Jimmy Johnson, to the recent adoption of actor Johnny Depp by the family of LaDonna Harris, a Comanche woman and social activist. As sovereign nations, tribes make decisions about who is considered a member, so our interest is not in whether adoptions are appropriate or legitimate. Rather, because the prevalence of the adoption narrative in American literature, film, television, holidays and history books far exceeds the actual occurrences of adoptions, we are interested in how this narrative spins a fantasy that an individual settler can become innocent, indeed heroic and indigenized, against a backdrop of national guilt. The adoption fantasy is the mythical trump card desired by critical settlers who feel remorse about settler colonialism, one that absolves them from the inheritance of settler crimes and that bequeaths a new inheritance of Native-ness *and claims to land* (which is a reaffirmation of what the settler project has been all along).

To more fully explain, we turn to perhaps the most influential version of the adoption narrative, penned by James Fenimore Cooper in 1823-1841. James Fenimore, son of "that genius in land speculation William Cooper" (Butterfield, 1954, p. 374), grew up in Six Nations territory that his father had grabbed and named after himself as Cooperstown, New York. In these Iroquois lakes, forests, and hills, James Fenimore, and later his daughter, Susan, imagined for themselves frontier romances full of tragic Indians, inventive and compassionate settlers, and virginal white/Indian women in virgin wilderness. Cooper's five-book series, collectively called

the *Leatherstocking Tales*, are foundational in the emergence of American literature. Melville called Cooper "our national author" and it was no exaggeration. His were the most widely read novels of the time and, in the age of the printing press, this meant they were the most circulated books in a U.S. print-based popular culture. Mass print established national language and identity, an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1991) from which emerges 'America' as a nation as opposed to just an assortment of former colonies. The *Tales* are credited with the constructions of the vanishing Indian, the resourceful Frontiersman, and the degenerate Negro: the pivotal triad of archetypes that forms the basis for an American national literature.

*The Last of Mohicans* is undoubtedly the most famous among the *Tales* and has been remade[12] into three separate television series in 1957, 1971, and 2004; an opera in 1977; a BBC radio adaptation in 1995; a 2007 Marvel comic book series; a stage drama in performance since 2010; and eleven separate films spanning 1912 to 1992. In a sense, *Last of the Mohicans* is a national narrative that has never stopped being remade[13].

Across all five books, Cooper's epic hero is Natty Bumppo, a white man 'gone native', at home in nature, praised for his wisdom and ways that are both Indian and white. In *Last of the Mohicans,* this hero becomes the adopted son of Chingachgook, fictional chief of the fictional tribe "Mohicans", who renames Natty, Nathaniel Hawkeye - thus legitimating and completing his Indigeneity. At the same time, Chingachgook conveniently fades into extinction. In a critical symbolic gesture, Chingachgook hands over his son Uncas - the last of the Mohicans - to the adopted, Indigenized white man, Hawkeye. When Uncas dies, the ramification is obvious: Hawkeye becomes without becoming the last of the Mohicans. *You are now one of us, you are now Native.* "The pale-faces are masters of the earth, and the time of the red-men has not yet come again" (Cooper 2000, p.407).

Cooper's books fantasize the founding and expansion of the U.S. settler nation by fictionalizing the period of 1740-1804, distilled into the single narrative of one man. The arc of his life stands in for the narrative of national development: the heroic settler Natty Bumppo transitions from British trapper to 'native' American, to prairie pioneer in the new Western frontier. Interestingly, the books themselves were written in reverse chronological order, starting with the pioneer, going backwards in time. Through such historical hypnosis, settler literature fabricates past lives, all the way back to an Indian past. 'I am American' becomes 'I was frontiersman, was British, was Indian'.

In this fantasy, Hawkeye is both adopter and adoptee. The act of adopting indigenous ways makes him 'deserving' to be adopted by the Indigenous. Settler fantasies of adoption alleviate the anxiety of settler un-belonging. He adopts the love of land and therefore thinks he belongs to the land. He is a first environmentalist and sentimentalist, nostalgic for vanishing

[12] Tellingly, these remakes were produced in Canada, Britain, Germany and the United States.

[13] To include all the 'remakes' of the story in its different forms (e.g. the post 9/11 historical fiction G*angs of New York*, the 2009 film *Avatar*, or the 2011 film *The Descendants* - also discussed in this article), would require an exhaustive and exhausting account well beyond the scope of this article.

Native ways. In today's jargon, he could be thought of as an eco-activist, naturalist, and Indian sympathizer. At the same time, his cultural hybridity is what makes him more 'fit' to survive - the ultimate social Darwinism - better than both British and Indian; he is the mythical American. Hawkeye, hybrid white and Indian, becomes the reluctant but nonetheless rightful inheritor of the land and warden of its vanishing people.

Similarly, the settler intellectual who hybridizes decolonial thought with Western critical traditions (metaphorizing decolonization), emerges superior to both Native intellectuals and continental theorists simultaneously. With his critical hawk-eye, he again sees the critique better than anyone and sees the world from a loftier station[14]. It is a fiction, just as Cooper's Hawkeye, just as the adoption, just as the belonging.

In addition to fabricating historical memory, the *Tales* serve to generate historical amnesia. The books were published between 1823-1841, at the height of the Jacksonian period with the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and subsequent Trail of Tears 1831-1837. During this time, 46,000 Native Americans were removed from their homelands, opening 25 million acres of land for re-settlement. The *Tales* are not only silent on Indian Removal but narrate the Indian as vanishing in an earlier time frame, and thus Indigenous people are already dead prior to removal.

Performing sympathy is critical to Cooper's project of settler innocence. It is no accident that he is often read as a sympathizer to the Indians (despite the fact that he didn't know any) in contrast to Jackson's policies of removal and genocide. Cooper is cast as the 'innocent' father of U.S. ideology, in contrast to the 'bad white men' of history.

Performing suffering is also critical to Cooper's project of settler innocence. Hawkeye takes on the (imagined) demeanor of the vanishing Native - brooding, vengeful, protecting a dying way of life, and unsuccessful in finding a mate and producing offspring. Thus sympathy and suffering are the tokens used to absorb the Native Other's difference, coded as pain, the 'not-I' into the 'I'.

The settler's personal suffering feeds his fantasy of mutuality. The 2011 film, *The Descendants,* is a modern remake of the adoption fantasy (blended with a healthy dose of settler nativism). George Clooney's character, "King" is a haole hypo-descendant of the last surviving princess of Hawai'i and reluctant inheritor of a massive expanse of land, the last wilderness on the Island of Kauai. In contrast to his obnoxious settler cousins, he earns his privilege as an overworked lawyer rather than relying on his unearned inheritance. Furthermore, Clooney's character suffers - he is a dysfunctional father, heading a dysfunctional family, watching his wife wither away in a coma, learning that she cheated on him - and so he is somehow Hawaiian at heart. Because pain is the token for oppression, claims to pain then equate to claims of being an innocent non-oppressor. By the film's end, King goes against the wishes of his profiteering settler cousins and chooses to "keep" the land, reluctantly accepting that his is the steward of the land, a responsibility bequeathed upon him as an accident of birth. This is the denouement of

[14] His lament is that no one else can see what he sees, just as Hawkeye laments his failed attempts to rescue white people from bad Indians, and good Indians from ignorant white people. He is the escapee from Plato's Cave. The rest of us are stuck in the dark.

reconciliation between the settler-I and the interiorized native-not-I within the settler. Sympathy and suffering are profoundly satisfying for settler cinema: *The Descendants* was nominated for 5 Academy Awards and won for Best Adapted Screenplay in 2012.

The beauty of this settler fantasy is that it adopts decolonization and aborts it in one gesture. Hawkeye adopts Uncas, who then conveniently dies. King adopts Hawai'i and negates the necessity for *ea*, Kanaka Maoli sovereignty. Decolonization is stillborn - rendered irrelevant because decolonization is already completed by the indigenized consciousness of the settler. Now 'we' are all Indian, all Hawaiian, and decolonization is no longer an issue. 'Our' only recourse is to move forward, however regretfully, with 'our' settler future.

In the unwritten decolonial version of Cooper's story, Hawkeye would lose his land back to the Mohawk - the real people upon whose land Cooperstown was built and whose rivers, lakes, and forests Cooper mined for his frontier romances. Hawkeye would shoot his last arrow, or his last long-rifle shot, return his eagle feather, and would be renamed Natty Bumppo, settler on Native land. The story would end with the moment of this recognition. Unresolved are the questions: Would a conversation follow after that between Native and the last settler? Would the settler leave or just vanish? Would he ask to stay, and if he did, who would say yes? These are questions that will be addressed at decolonization, and not a priori in order to appease anxieties for a settler future.

### *Moves to innocence III: Colonial equivocation*

A more nuanced move to innocence is the homogenizing of various experiences of oppression as colonization. Calling different groups 'colonized' without describing their relationship to settler colonialism is an equivocation, "the fallacy of using a word in different senses at different stages of the reasoning" (Etymonline, 2001). In particular, describing all struggles against imperialism as 'decolonizing' creates a convenient ambiguity between decolonization and social justice work, especially among people of color, queer people, and other groups minoritized by the settler nation-state. 'We are all colonized,' may be a true statement but is deceptively embracive and vague, its inference: 'None of us are settlers.' Equivocation, or calling everything by the same name, is a move towards innocence that is especially vogue in coalition politics among people of color.

People of color who enter/are brought into the settler colonial nation-state also enter the triad of relations between settler-native-slave. We are referring here to the colonial pathways that are usually described as 'immigration' and how the refugee/immigrant/migrant is invited to be a settler in some scenarios, given the appropriate investments in whiteness, or is made an illegal, criminal presence in other scenarios. Ghetto colonialism, prisons, and under resourced compulsory schooling are specializations of settler colonialism in North America; they are

produced by the collapsing of internal, external, and settler colonialisms, into new blended categories[15].

This triad of settler-native-slave and its selective collapsibility seems to be unique to settler colonial nations. For example, all Aleut people on the Aleutian Islands were collected and placed in internment camps for four years after the bombing of Dutch Harbor; the stated rationale was the protection of the people but another likely reason was that the U.S. Government feared the Aleuts would become allies with the Japanese and/or be difficult to differentiate from potential Japanese spies. White people who lived on the Aleutian Islands at that same time were not interned. Internment in abandoned warehouses and canneries in Southeast Alaska was the cause of significant numbers of death of children and elders, physical injury, and illness among Aleut people. Aleut internment during WWII is largely ignored as part of U.S. history. The shuffling of Indigenous people between Native, enslavable Other, and Orientalized Other[16] shows how settler colonialism constructs and collapses its triad of categories.

This colonizing trick explains why certain minorities can at times become model and quasi-assimilable (as exemplified by Asian settler colonialism, civil rights, model minority discourse, and the use of 'hispanic' as an ethnic category to mean both white and non-white) yet, in times of crisis, revert to the status of foreign contagions (as exemplified by Japanese Internment, Islamophobia, Chinese Exclusion, Red Scare, anti-Irish nativism, WWII anti-semitism, and anti-Mexican-immigration). This is why 'labor' or 'workers' as an agential political class fails to activate the decolonizing project. "[S]hifting lines of the international division of labor" (Spivak, 1985, p. 84) bisect the very category of labor into caste-like bodies built for work on one hand and rewardable citizen-workers on the other. Some labor becomes settler, while excess labor becomes enslavable, criminal, murderable.

The impossibility of fully becoming a white settler - in this case, white referring to an exceptionalized position with assumed rights to invulnerability and legal supremacy - as articulated by minority literature preoccupied with "glass ceilings" and "forever foreign" status and "myth of the model minority", offers a strong critique of the myth of the democratic nation-state. However, its logical endpoint, the attainment of equal legal and cultural entitlements, is actually an investment in settler colonialism. Indeed, even the ability to be a minority citizen in the settler nation means an option to become a brown settler. For many people of color, becoming a subordinate settler is an option even when becoming white is not.

"Following stolen resources" is a phrase that Wayne has encountered, used to describe Filipino overseas labor (over 10% of the population of the Philippines is working abroad) and other migrations from colony to metropole. This phrase is an important anti-colonial framing of a

[15] E.g. Detention centers contain the foreign, non-citizen subject who is paradoxically outside of the nation yet at the mercy of imperial sovereignty within the metropole.

[16] We are using Orientalized Other in sense of the enemy other, following Edward Said's (1978) analysis of Orientalism.

colonial situation. However an anti-colonial critique is not the same as a decolonizing framework; anti-colonial critique often celebrates empowered postcolonial subjects who seize denied privileges from the metropole. This anti-to-post-colonial project doesn't strive to undo colonialism but rather to remake it and subvert it. Seeking stolen resources is entangled with settler colonialism because those resources were nature/Native first, then enlisted into the service of settlement and thus almost impossible to reclaim without re-occupying Native land. Furthermore, the postcolonial pursuit of resources is fundamentally an anthropocentric model, as land, water, air, animals, and plants are never able to become postcolonial; they remain objects to be exploited by the empowered postcolonial subject.

Equivocation is the vague equating of colonialisms that erases the sweeping scope of land as the basis of wealth, power, law in settler nation-states. Vocalizing a 'muliticultural' approach to oppressions, or remaining silent on settler colonialism while talking about colonialisms, or tacking on a gesture towards Indigenous people without addressing Indigenous sovereignty or rights, or forwarding a thesis on decolonization without regard to unsettling/deoccupying land, are equivocations. That is, they ambiguously avoid engaging with settler colonialism; they are ambivalent about minority / people of color / colonized Others *as settlers*; they are cryptic about Indigenous land rights in spaces inhabited by people of color.

### *Moves to innocence IV: Free your mind and the rest will follow*

Fanon told us in 1963 that decolonizing the mind is the first step, not the only step toward overthrowing colonial regimes. Yet we wonder whether another settler move to innocence is to focus on decolonizing the mind, or the cultivation of critical consciousness, as if it were the sole activity of decolonization; to allow *conscientization* to stand in for the more uncomfortable task of relinquishing stolen land. We agree that curricula, literature, and pedagogy can be crafted to aid people in learning to see settler colonialism, to articulate critiques of settler epistemology, and set aside settler histories and values in search of ethics that reject domination and exploitation; this is not unimportant work. However, the front-loading of critical consciousness building can waylay decolonization, even though the experience of teaching and learning to be critical of settler colonialism can be so powerful it can feel like it is indeed making change. Until stolen land is relinquished, critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism. So, we respectfully disagree with George Clinton and Funkadelic (1970) and En Vogue (1992) when they assert that if you "free your mind, the rest (your ass) will follow."

Paulo Freire, eminent education philosopher, popular educator, and liberation theologian, wrote his celebrated book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, in no small part as a response to Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth.* Its influence upon critical pedagogy and on the practices of educators committed to social justice cannot be overstated. Therefore, it is important to point out significant differences between Freire and Fanon, especially with regard to de/colonization. Freire situates the work of liberation in the minds of the oppressed, an abstract category of dehumanized worker vis-a-vis a similarly abstract category of oppressor. This is a sharp right

turn away from Fanon's work, which always positioned the work of liberation in the particularities of colonization, in the specific structural and interpersonal categories of Native and settler. Under Freire's paradigm, it is unclear who the oppressed are, even more ambiguous who the oppressors are, and it is inferred throughout that an innocent third category of enlightened human exists: "those who suffer with [the oppressed] and fight at their side" (Freire, 2000, p. 42). These words, taken from the opening dedication of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, invoke the same settler fantasy of mutuality based on sympathy and suffering.

Fanon positions decolonization as chaotic, an unclean break from a colonial condition that is already over determined by the violence of the colonizer and unresolved in its possible futures. By contrast, Freire positions liberation as redemption, a freeing of both oppressor and oppressed through their humanity. Humans become 'subjects' who then proceed to work on the 'objects' of the world (animals, earth, water), and indeed read the word (critical consciousness) in order to write the world (exploit nature). For Freire, there are no Natives, no Settlers, and indeed no history, and the future is simply a rupture from the timeless present. Settler colonialism is absent from his discussion, implying either that it is an unimportant analytic or that it is an already completed project of the past (a past oppression perhaps). Freire's theories of liberation resoundingly echo the allegory of Plato's Cave, a continental philosophy of mental emancipation, whereby the thinking man individualistically emerges from the dark cave of ignorance into the light of critical consciousness.

By contrast, black feminist thought roots freedom in the darkness of the cave, in that well of feeling and wisdom from which all knowledge is recreated.

> These places of possibility within ourselves are dark because they are ancient and hidden; they have survived and grown strong through darkness. Within these deep places, each one of us holds an incredible reserve of creativity and power, of unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling. The woman's place of power within each of us is neither white nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient, and it is deep. (Lorde, 1984, pp. 36-37)

Audre Lorde's words provide a sharp contrast to Plato's sight-centric image of liberation: "The white fathers told us, I think therefore I am; and the black mothers in each of us - the poet - whispers in our dreams, I feel therefore I can be free" (p. 38). For Lorde, writing is not action upon the world. Rather, poetry is giving a name to the nameless, "first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action" (p. 37). Importantly, freedom is a possibility that is not just mentally generated; it is particular and felt.

Freire's philosophies have encouraged educators to use "colonization" as a metaphor for oppression. In such a paradigm, "internal colonization" reduces to "mental colonization", logically leading to the solution of decolonizing one's mind and the rest will follow. Such philosophy conveniently sidesteps the most unsettling of questions:

> The essential thing is to see clearly, to think clearly - that is, dangerously and to answer clearly the innocent first question: what, fundamentally, is colonization? (Cesaire, 2000, p. 32)

Because colonialism is comprised of global and historical relations, Cesaire's question must be considered globally and historically. However, it cannot be reduced to a global answer, nor a historical answer. To do so is to use colonization metaphorically. "What is colonization?" must be answered specifically, with attention to the colonial apparatus that is assembled to order the relationships between particular peoples, lands, the 'natural world', and 'civilization'. Colonialism is marked by its specializations. In North America and other settings, settler sovereignty imposes sexuality, legality, raciality, language, religion and property in specific ways. Decolonization likewise must be thought through in these particularities.

> To agree on what [decolonization] is not: neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease, and tyranny... (Cesaire, 2000, p. 32)

We deliberately extend Cesaire's words above to assert what decolonization is not. It is not converting Indigenous politics to a Western doctrine of liberation; it is not a philanthropic process of 'helping' the at-risk and alleviating suffering; it is not a generic term for struggle against oppressive conditions and outcomes. The broad umbrella of social justice may have room underneath for all of these efforts. By contrast, decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life. Decolonization is not a metonym for social justice.

We don't intend to discourage those who have dedicated careers and lives to teaching themselves and others to be critically conscious of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, and settler colonialism. We are asking them/you to consider how the pursuit of critical consciousness, the pursuit of social justice through a critical enlightenment, can also be settler moves to innocence - diversions, distractions, which relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility, and conceal the need to give up land or power or privilege.

Anna Jacobs' 2009 Master's thesis explores the possibilities for what she calls *white harm reduction* models. Harm reduction models attempt to reduce the harm or risk of specific practices. Jacobs identifies white supremacy as a public health issue that is at the root of most other public health issues. The goal of white harm reduction models, Jacobs says, is to reduce the harm that white supremacy has had on white people, and the deep harm it has caused non-white people over generations. Learning from Jacobs' analysis, we understand the curricular-pedagogical project of critical consciousness as *settler harm reduction*, crucial in the resuscitation of practices and intellectual life outside of settler ontologies. (Settler) harm reduction is intended only as a stopgap. As the environmental crisis escalates and peoples around the globe are exposed to greater concentrations of violence and poverty, the need for settler harm reduction is acute, profoundly so. At the same time we remember that, by definition, settler harm

reduction, like conscientization, is not the same as decolonization and does not inherently offer any pathways that lead to decolonization.

*Moves to innocence V: A(s)t(e)risk peoples*

This settler move to innocence is concerned with the ways in which Indigenous peoples are counted, codified, represented, and included/disincluded by educational researchers and other social science researchers. Indigenous peoples are rendered visible in mainstream educational research in two main ways: as "at risk" peoples and as asterisk peoples. This comprises a settler move to innocence because it erases and then conceals the erasure of Indigenous peoples within the settler colonial nation-state and moves Indigenous nations as "populations" to the margins of public discourse.

As "at risk" peoples, Indigenous students and families are described as on the verge of extinction, culturally and economically bereft, engaged or soon-to-be engaged in self-destructive behaviors which can interrupt their school careers and seamless absorption into the economy. Even though it is widely known and verified that Native youth gain access to personal and academic success when they also have access to/instruction in their home languages, most Native American and Alaskan Native youth are taught in English-only schools by temporary teachers who know little about their students' communities (Lomawaima and McCarty, 2006; Lee, 2011). Even though Indigenous knowledge systems predate, expand, update, and complicate the curricula found in most public schools, schools attended by poor Indigenous students are among those most regimented in attempts to comply with federal mandates. Though these mandates intrude on the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, the "services" promised at the inception of these mandates do little to make the schools attended by Indigenous youth better at providing them a compelling, relevant, inspiring and meaningful education.

At the same time, Indigenous communities become the asterisk peoples, meaning they are represented by an asterisk in large and crucial data sets, many of which are conducted to inform public policy that impact our/their lives (Villegas, 2012). Education and health statistics are unavailable from Indigenous communities for a variety of reasons and, when they are made available, the size of the *n*, or the sample size, can appear to be negligible when compared to the sample size of other/race-based categories. Though Indigenous scholars such as Malia Villegas recognize that Indigenous peoples are distinct from each other but also from other racialized groups surveyed in these studies, they argue that difficulty of collecting basic education and health information about this small and heterogeneous category must be overcome in order to counter the disappearance of Indigenous particularities in public policy.

In U.S. educational research in particular, Indigenous peoples are included only as asterisks, as footnotes into dominant paradigms of educational inequality in the U.S. This can be observed in the progressive literature on school discipline, on 'underrepresented minorities' in higher education, and in the literature of reparation, i.e., redressing 'past' wrongs against non-white Others. Under such paradigms, which do important work on alleviating the symptoms of

colonialism (poverty, dispossession, criminality, premature death, cultural genocide), Indigeneity is simply an "and" or an illustration of oppression. 'Urban education', for example, is a code word for the schooling of black, brown, and ghettoized youth who form the numerical majority in divested public schools. Urban American Indians and Native Alaskans become an asterisk group, invisibilized, even though about two-thirds of Indigenous peoples in the U.S. live in urban areas, according to the 2010 census. Yet, urban Indians receive fewer federal funds for education, health, and employment than their counterparts on reservations (Berry, 2012). Similarly, Native Pasifika people become an asterisk in the Asian Pacific Islander category and their politics/epistemologies/experiences are often subsumed under a pan-ethnic Asian-American master narrative. From a settler viewpoint that concerns itself with numerical inequality, e.g. the achievement gap, underrepresentation, and the 99%'s short share of the wealth of the metropole, the asterisk is an outlier, an outnumber. It is a token gesture, an inclusion and an enclosure of Native people into the politics of equity. These acts of inclusion assimilate Indigenous sovereignty, ways of knowing, and ways of being by remaking a collective-comprised tribal identity into an individualized ethnic identity.

From a decolonizing perspective, the asterisk is a body count that does not account for Indigenous politics, educational concerns, and epistemologies. Urban land (indeed all land) is Native land. The vast majority of Native youth in North America live in urban settings. Any decolonizing urban education endeavor must address the foundations of urban land pedagogy and Indigenous politics *vis-a-vis* the settler colonial state.

### *Moves to innocence VI: Re-occupation and urban homesteading*

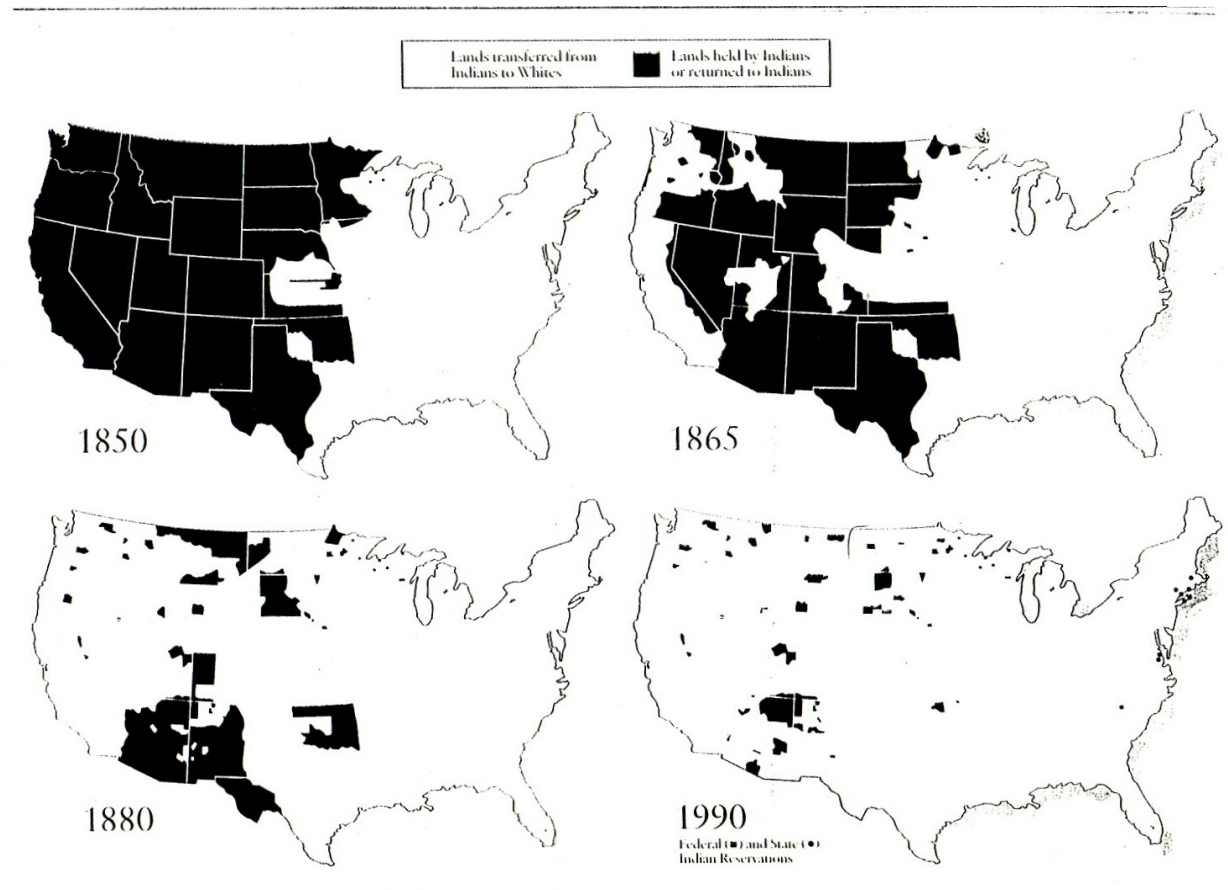
The Occupy movement for many economically marginalized people has been a welcome expression of resistance to the massive disparities in the distribution of wealth; for many Indigenous people, Occupy is another settler re-occupation on stolen land. The rhetoric of the movement relies upon problematic assumptions about social justice and is a prime example of the incommensurability between "re/occupy" and "decolonize" as political agendas. The pursuit of worker rights (and rights to work) and minoritized people's rights in a settler colonial context can appear to be anti-capitalist, but this pursuit is nonetheless largely pro-colonial. That is, the ideal of "redistribution of wealth" camouflages how much of that wealth is *land*, Native land. In Occupy, the "99%" is invoked as a deserving supermajority, in contrast to the unearned wealth of the "1%". It renders Indigenous peoples (a 0.9% 'super-minority') completely invisible and absorbed, just an asterisk group to be subsumed into the legion of occupiers.

*Figure 1.1.* If U.S. land were divided like U.S. wealth

For example, "If U.S. land were divided like U.S. wealth" (figure 1.1) is a popular graphic that was electronically circulated on the Internet in late 2011 in connection with the Occupy movement. The image reveals inherent assumptions about land, including: land is property; land is/belongs to the United States; land should be distributed democratically. The beliefs that land can be owned by people, and that occupation is a right, reflect a profoundly settling, anthropocentric, colonial view of the world.

In figure 1.1, the irony of mapping of wealth onto land seems to escape most of those who re-posted the images on their social networking sites and blogs: Land is already wealth; it is already divided; and its distribution is the greatest indicator of racial inequality[17]. Indeed the current wealth crisis facing the 99% spiraled with the crash in home/land ownership. Land (not money) is actually the basis for U.S. wealth. If we took away land, there would be little wealth left to redistribute.

[17] Wealth, most significantly in the form of home ownership, supercedes income as an indicator of disparities between racial groups. See discussions on the wealth gap, home ownership, and racial inequality by Thomas Shapiro (2004), in *The Hidden Cost of Being African American: How Wealth Perpetuates Inequality*.




NATIVE LAND: 100%. RESERVATION LAND: 2.3%.

*Figure 1.2*. If Native land were [is] divided like Native land

Settler colonization can be visually understood as the unbroken pace of invasion, and settler occupation, into Native lands: the white space in figure 1.2. Decolonization, as a process, would repatriate land to Indigenous peoples, reversing the timeline of these images.

As detailed by public intellectuals/bloggers such as *Tequila Sovereign* (Lenape scholar Joanne Barker), some Occupy sites, including Boston, Denver, Austin, and Albuquerque tried to engage in discussions about the problematic and colonial overtones of occupation (Barker, October 9, 2011). Barker blogs about a firsthand experience in bringing a proposal for a *Memorandum of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples,*[18] to the General Assembly in Occupy Oakland. The memorandum, signed by Corrina Gould, (Chochenyo Ohlone - the first peoples of Oakland/Ohlone), Barker, and numerous other Indigenous and non-Indigenous activist-scholars, called for the acknowledgement of Oakland as already occupied and on stolen land; of the ongoing defiance by Indigenous peoples in the U.S. and around the globe against imperialism,

[18] The memorandum can be found at http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2011/10/29/18695950.php, last retrieved June 1, 2012.

colonialism, and oppression; the need for genuine and respectful involvement of Indigenous peoples in the Occupy Oakland movement; and the aspiration to "Decolonize Oakland," rather than re-occupy it. From Barker's account of the responses from settler individuals to the memorandum,

> Ultimately, what they [settler participants in Occupy Oakland] were asking is whether or not we were asking them, as non-indigenous people, the impossible? Would their solidarity with us require them to give up their lands, their resources, their ways of life, so that we – who numbered so few, after all – could have more? Could have it all? (Barker, October 30, 2011)

These responses, resistances by settler participants to the aspiration of decolonization in Occupy Oakland, illustrate the reluctance of some settlers to engage the prospect of decolonization beyond the metaphorical or figurative level. Further, they reveal the limitations to "solidarity," without the willingness to acknowledge stolen land and how stolen land benefits settlers. "Genuine solidarity with indigenous peoples," Barker continues, "assumes a basic understanding of how histories of colonization and imperialism have produced and *still produce* the legal and economic possibility for Oakland" (ibid., emphasis original).

For social justice movements, like Occupy, to truly aspire to decolonization non-metaphorically, they would impoverish, not enrich, the 99%+ settler population of United States. Decolonization eliminates settler property rights and settler sovereignty. It requires the abolition of land as property and upholds the sovereignty of Native land and people.

There are important parallels between Occupy/Decolonize and the French/Haitian Revolutions of 1789-1799 and 1791-1804, respectively. Haiti has the dubious distinction of being "the poorest country in the Western hemisphere" (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012); yet, it was the richest of France's colonies until the Haitian Revolution, the only slave revolution to ever found a state. This paradox can be explained by what/who counts as whose property. Under French colonialism, Haiti was a worth a fortune in enslaved human beings. From the French slave owners' perspectives, Haitian independence abolished not slavery, but their property and a source of common-wealth. Unfortunately, history provides us with the exact figures on what their property was worth; in 1825, "France recognized Haitian independence by a treaty requiring Haiti to pay an indemnity of 150 million francs payable in 5 years to compensate absentee slaveowners for their losses" (Schuller, 2007, p.149). The magnitude[19] of these

[19] 150 million Francs was the equivalent of France's annual budget (and Haiti's population was less than 1% of France's), 10 times all annual Haitian exports in 1825, equivalent to $21 billion in 2010 U.S. Dollars. By contrast France sold the Louisiana Purchase to the United States in 1803 for a net sum of 42 million Francs. The indemnity demand, delivered by 12 warships armed with 500 canons, "heralded a strategy of plunder" (Schuller, 2007, p.166), as a new technology in colonial reconquest.

reparations not *for* slavery, but *to* former slave owners, plunged Haiti into eternal debt[20]. Occupy draws almost directly from the values of the French Revolution: the Commons, the General Assembly, the natural right to property, and the resistance to the decolonization of Indigenous life/land. In 1789, the French *Communes* (Commons) declared themselves a National Assembly directly "of the People" (the 99%) against the representative assembly of "the Estates" (the 1%) set up by the ruling elite, and adopted the celebrated *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen.* Not unlike the heated discussions at the December 4, 2011 General Assembly of Occupy Oakland that ultimately rejected the proposal to change the name to "Decolonize Oakland", the 1789 National Assembly debated at great length over the language of emancipation in the *Declaration*. Ultimately, the *Declaration* abolished slavery but not property, and effectively stipulated that property trumped emancipation. While rhetorically declaring men as forever free and equal (and thus unenslavable), it assured the (revolutionary) colonial proprietors in the assembly that their chattel would be untouched, stating unequivocally: "The right to property being inviolable and sacred, no one ought to be deprived of it..." (Blackburn, 2006, p. 650).

Table 1.
*Outnumbers. Incommensurable.*

| | |
|---|---|
| French Revolution | 99% French, 1% Slaves[21] |
| Haitian Revolution | 90% Slaves, 10% Whites & Free Blacks |

Decolonizing the Americas means all land is repatriated and all settlers become landless. It is incommensurable with the redistribution of Native land/life as common-wealth.

Table 2.
*Outnumbers. Incommensurable.*

| | |
|---|---|
| Occupy | 99% Occupiers, 1% Owners |
| Decolonize | 0.9% Indigenous[22], 99.1% Settlers[23] |

[20] Haiti has literally been in debt from the moment it was recognized as a country. Haiti paid off its indemnity to France in 1937, but only through new indemnity with the United States. Ironically, in contemporary times, the Paris Club has power over Haiti's debt, and thus maintains Haiti's poverty.

[21] At 28 million people, France was the 3rd most populous country in the world in 1789, after China and India. Haiti's slave population in 1791 was approximately 452,000 - a fluctuating number as the slave mortality rate exceeded the birth rate, requiring a constant supply of newly enslaved Africans; and approximately 200,000 slaves died in the revolution. 1% refers to this number of enslaved people in Haiti relative to the French population, and does not include those enslaved in France or its other colonies.

[22] According to the 2010 U.S. census, Native Americans comprise 0.9% of U.S. inhabitants.

Our critique of Occupation is not just a critique of rhetoric. The call to "occupy everything" has legitimized a set of practices with problematic relationships to land and to Indigenous sovereignty. Urban homesteading, for example, is the practice of re-settling urban land in the fashion of self-styled pioneers in a mythical frontier. Not surprisingly, urban homesteading can also become a form of playing Indian, invoking Indigeneity as 'tradition' and claiming Indian-like spirituality while evading Indigenous sovereignty and the modern presence of actual urban Native peoples. More significant examples are Occupiers' claims to land and their imposition of Western forms of governance within their tent cities/colonies. Claiming land for the Commons and asserting consensus as the rule of the Commons, erases existing, prior, and future Native land rights, decolonial leadership, and forms of self-government.

Occupation is a move towards innocence that hides behind the numerical superiority of the settler nation, the elision of democracy with justice, and the logic that what became property under the 1% rightfully belongs to the other 99%.

In contrast to the settler labor of occupying the commons, homesteading, and possession, some scholars have begun to consider the labor of de-occupation in the undercommons, permanent fugitivity, and dispossession as possibilities for a radical black praxis. Such "a labor that is dedicated to the reproduction of social dispossession as having an ethical dimension" (Moten & Harney, 2004, p.110), includes both the refusal of acquiring property and of being property

## Incommensurability is unsettling

Having elaborated on settler moves to innocence, we give a synopsis of the imbrication of settler colonialism with transnationalist, abolitionist, and critical pedagogy movements - efforts that are often thought of as exempt from Indigenous decolonizing analyses - as a synthesis of how decolonization as material, not metaphor, unsettles the innocence of these movements. These are interruptions which destabilize, un-balance, and repatriate the very terms and assumptions of some of the most radical efforts to reimagine human power relations. We argue that the opportunities for solidarity lie in what is incommensurable rather than what is common across these efforts.

We offer these perspectives on unsettling innocence because they are examples of what we might call an ethic of incommensurability, which recognizes what is distinct, what is sovereign for project(s) of decolonization in relation to human and civil rights based social justice projects. There are portions of these projects that simply cannot speak to one another, cannot be aligned or allied. We make these notations to highlight opportunities for what can only ever be strategic and contingent collaborations, and to indicate the reasons that lasting solidarities may be elusive, even undesirable. Below we point to unsettling themes that challenge the coalescence of social justice endeavors broadly assembled into three areas:

[23] Wayne would like to give special thanks to Jodi Byrd for pointing out this numerical irony.

Transnational or Third World decolonizations, Abolition, and Critical Space-Place Pedagogies. For each of these areas, we offer entry points into the literature - beginning a sort of bibliography of incommensurability.

### *Third world decolonizations*

The anti-colonial turn towards the transnational can sometimes involve ignoring the settler colonial context where one resides and how that inhabitation is implicated in settler colonialism, in order to establish "global" solidarities that presumably suffer fewer complicities and complications. This deliberate not-seeing is morally convenient but avoids an important feature of the aforementioned selective collapsibility of settler colonial-nations states. Expressions such as "the Global South within the Global North" and "the Third World in the First World" neglect the Four Directions via a Flat Earth perspective and ambiguate First Nations with Third World migrants. For people writing on Third World decolonizations, but who do so upon Native land, we invite you to consider the permanent settler war as the theater for all imperial wars:

- the Orientalism of Indigenous Americans (Berger, 2004; Marez, 2007)
- discovery, invasion, occupation, and Commons as the claims of settler sovereignty (Ford, 2010)
- heteropatriarchy as the imposition of settler sexuality (Morgensen, 2011)
- citizenship as coercive and forced assimilation into the white settler normative (Bruyneel, 2004; Somerville, 2010)
- religion as covenant for settler nation-state (A.J. Barker, 2009; Maldonado-Torres, 2008)
- the frontier as the first and always the site of invasion and war (Byrd, 2011),
- U.S. imperialism as the expansion of settler colonialism (*ibid*)
- Asian settler colonialism (Fujikane, 2012; Fujikane, & Okamura, 2008, Saranillio, 2010a, 2010b)
- the frontier as the language of 'progress' and discovery (Maldonado-Torres, 2008)
- rape as settler colonial structure (Deer, 2009; 2010)
- the discourse of terrorism as the terror of Native retribution (Tuck & Ree, forthcoming)
- Native Feminisms as incommensurable with other feminisms (Arvin, Tuck, Morrill, forthcoming; Goeman & Denetdale, 2009).

### *Abolition*

The abolition of slavery often presumes the expansion of settlers who own Native land and life via inclusion of emancipated slaves and prisoners into the settler nation-state. As we have noted, it is no accident that the U.S. government promised 40 acres of Indian land as reparations for plantation slavery. Likewise, indentured European laborers were often awarded tracts of 'unsettled' Indigenous land as payment at the end of their service (McCoy, forthcoming).

Communal ownership of land has figured centrally in various movements for autonomous, self-determined communities. "The land belongs to those who work it," disturbingly parrots Lockean justifications for seizing Native land as property, 'earned' through one's labor in clearing and cultivating 'virgin' land. For writers on the prison industrial complex, il/legality, and other forms of slavery, we urge you to consider how enslavement is a twofold procedure: removal from land and the creation of property (land and bodies). Thus, abolition is likewise twofold, requiring the repatriation of land and the abolition of property (land and bodies). Abolition means self-possession but not object-possession, repatriation but not reparation:

- "The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for white, or women created for men" (Alice Walker, describing the work of Marjorie Spiegel, in the in the preface to Spigel's 1988 book, *The Dreaded Comparison*).
- Enslavement/removal of Native Americans (Gallay, 2009)
- Slaves who become slave-owners, savagery as enslavability, chattel slavery as a sign of civilization (Gallay, 2009)
- Black fugitivity, undercommons, and radical dispossession (Moten, 2008; Moten & Harney, 2004; Moten & Harney, 2010)
- Incarceration as a settler colonialism strategy of land dispossession (Ross, 1998; Watson, 2007)
- Native land and Native people as co-constituitive (Meyer, 2008; Kawagley, 2010)

### *Critical pedagogies*

The many critical pedagogies that engage emancipatory education, place based education, environmental education, critical multiculturalism, and urban education often position land as public Commons or seek commonalities between struggles. Although we believe that "we must be fluent" in each other's stories and struggles (paraphrasing Alexander, 2002, p.91), we detect precisely this lack of fluency in land and Indigenous sovereignty. Yupiaq scholar, Oscar Kawagley's assertion, "We know that Mother Nature has a culture, and it is a Native culture" (2010, p. xiii), directs us to think through land as "more than a site *upon* which humans make history or as a location that accumulates history" (Goeman, 2008, p.24). The forthcoming special issue in *Environmental Education Research*, "Land Education: Indigenous, postcolonial, and decolonizing perspectives on place and environmental education research" might be a good starting point to consider the incommensurability of place-based, environmentalist, urban pedagogies with land education.

- The urban as Indigenous (Bang, 2009; Belin, 1999; Friedel, 2011; Goeman, 2008; Intertribal Friendship House & Lobo, 2002)
- Indigenous storied land as disrupting settler maps (Goeman, 2008)

- Novels, poetry, and essays by Greg Sarris, Craig Womack, Joy Harjo, Gerald Vizenor
- To Remain an Indian (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006)
- Shadow Curriculum (Richardson, 2011)
- Red Pedagogy (Grande, 2004)
- Land Education (McCoy, Tuck, McKenzie, forthcoming)

## More on incommensurability

*Incommensurability is an acknowledgement that decolonization will require a change in the order of the world (Fanon, 1963). This is not to say that Indigenous peoples or Black and brown peoples take positions of dominance over white settlers; the goal is not for everyone to merely swap spots on the settler-colonial triad, to take another turn on the merry-go-round. The goal is to break the relentless structuring of the triad - a break and not a compromise (Memmi, 1991).*

*Breaking the settler colonial triad, in direct terms, means repatriating land to sovereign Native tribes and nations, abolition of slavery in its contemporary forms, and the dismantling of the imperial metropole. Decolonization "here" is intimately connected to anti-imperialism elsewhere. However, decolonial struggles here/there are not parallel, not shared equally, nor do they bring neat closure to the concerns of all involved - particularly not for settlers. Decolonization is not equivocal to other anti-colonial struggles. It is incommensurable.*

*There is so much that is incommensurable, so many overlaps that can't be figured, that cannot be resolved. Settler colonialism fuels imperialism all around the globe. Oil is the motor and motive for war and so was salt, so will be water. Settler sovereignty over these very pieces of earth, air, and water is what makes possible these imperialisms. The same yellow pollen in the water of the Laguna Pueblo reservation in New Mexico, Leslie Marmon Silko reminds us, is the same uranium that annihilated over 200,000 strangers in 2 flashes. The same yellow pollen that poisons the land from where it came. Used in the same war that took a generation of young Pueblo men. Through the voice of her character Betonie, Silko writes, "Thirty thousand years ago they were not strangers. You saw what the evil had done; you saw the witchery ranging as wide as the world" (Silko, 1982, p. 174). In Tucson, Arizona, where Silko lives, her books are now banned in schools. Only curricular materials affirming the settler innocence, ingenuity, and right to America may be taught.*

*In "No", her response to the 2003 United States invasion of Iraq, Mvskoke/Creek poet Joy Harjo (2004) writes, "Yes, that was me you saw shaking with bravery, with a government issued rifle on my back. I'm sorry I could not greet you, as you deserved, my relative." Don't Native Americans participate in greater rates in the military? asks the young-ish man from Viet Nam.*

*"Indian Country" was/is the term used in Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Iraq by the U.S. military for 'enemy territory'. The first Black American President said without blinking, "There was a point before folks had left, before we had gotten everybody back on the helicopter and were flying back to base, where they said Geronimo has been killed, and Geronimo was the code*

*name for bin Laden." Elmer Pratt, Black Panther leader, falsely imprisoned for 27 years, was a Vietnam Veteran, was nicknamed 'Geronimo'. Geronimo is settler nickname for the Bedonkohe Apache warrior who fought Mexican and then U.S. expansion into Apache tribal lands. The Colt .45 was perfected to kill Indigenous people during the 'liberation' of what became the Philippines, but it was first invented for the 'Indian Wars' in North America alongside The Hotchkiss Canon- a gattling gun that shot canonballs. The technologies of the permanent settler war are reserviced for foreign wars, including boarding schools, colonial schools, urban schools run by military personnel.*

*It is properly called Indian Country.*

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 8, 1882.

**The Hotchkiss Revolving Cannon**

which the cut represents, mounted on the field carriage, has been adopted by the United States for both Field and Naval purposes, and by nearly all the Governments of Europe.

They are made of 37mm., 47mm., and 53mm. calibre, and fire common and steel shell.

The 37mm. and 47mm. fire 60 to 80 shell per minute, giving 1,500 to 2,000 fragments. In service, with deliberate aim at moving objects, from 15 to 20, giving 1,200 dangerous fragments per minute.

The Naval gun is mounted on the non-recoil principle, and being aimed from the shoulder, with the ease of a musket, attains a greater accuracy at sea than any other cannon.

The range of the 37mm. gun is 3,000 yards, of the 47mm., 6,500 yards.

The steel shell from the smaller gun penetrates all torpedo boats up to 2,000 yards, and at acute angles up to 2,000 yards, and the 47mm. perforates all the unarmored ships now in service.

For Field service the accuracy of fire and regularity of range are unsurpassed.

(See Official Reports of Chief of Ordnance, U. S. A.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, ADDRESS

HOTCHKISS & CO., 21 RUE ROYALE, PARIS.

Or MESSRS. GRAHAM & HAINES,

113 Chambers Street, New York.

*Figure 1.3.* Hotchkiss Revolving Cannon

*Ideologies of US settler colonialism directly informed Australian settler colonialism. South African apartheid townships, the kill-zones in what became the Philippine colony, then nation-state, the checkerboarding of Palestinian land with checkpoints, were modeled after U.S. seizures of land and containments of Indian bodies to reservations. The racial science developed in the U.S. (a settler colonial racial science) informed Hitler's designs on racial purity ("This book is my bible" he said of Madison Grant's The Passing of the Great Race). The admiration is sometimes mutual, the doctors and administrators of forced sterilizations of black, Native, disabled, poor, and mostly female people - The Sterilization Act accompanied the Racial Integrity Act and the Pocohontas Exception - praised the Nazi eugenics program. Forced sterilizations became illegal in California in 1964. The management technologies of North American settler colonialism have provided the tools for internal colonialisms elsewhere.*

*So to with philosophies of state and corporate land-grabbing*[24]*. The prominence of "flat world" perspectives asserts that technology has afforded a diminished significance of place and borders. The claim is that U.S. borders have become more flexible, yet simultaneously, the physical border has become more absolute and enforced. The border is no longer just a line suturing two nation-states; the U.S. now polices its borders interior to its territory and exercises*

[24] See also Arundhati Roy (2012) in Capitalism: A Ghost Story

*sovereignty throughout the globe. Just as sovereignty has expanded, so has settler colonialism in partial forms.*

*New Orleans' lower ninth ward lies at the confluence of river channels and gulf waters, and at the intersection of land grabbing and human bondage. The collapsing of levies heralded the selective collapsibility of native-slave, again, for the purpose of reinvasion, resettlement, reinhabitation. The naturalized disaster of Hurricane Katrina's floodwaters laid the perfect cover for land speculation and the ablution of excess people. What can't be absorbed, can't be folded in (because the settlers won't give up THEIR land to advance abolition), translates into bodies stacked on top of one another in public housing and prisons, in cells, kept from the labor market, making labor for others (guards and other corrections personnel) making money for states -human homesteading. It necessitates the manufacturing of crime at rates higher than anywhere in the world. 1 in 6 people in the state of Louisiana are incarcerated, the highest number of caged people per capita, making it the prison capital of United States, and therefore the prison capital of the world.*

Table 3
*Prison capital of the world*[25].

| | **Prisoners per 100,000 residents** |
|---|---|
| Louisiana | 1,619 |
| United States | 730 |
| Russia | 450 |
| Iran | 333 |
| China | 122 |
| Afghanistan | 62 |

*The Yazoo and Mississippi Rivers' delta flood plain was once land so fertile that it could be squeezed for excess production of cotton, giving rise to exceptionally large-scale plantation slavery. Plantation owners lived in houses like pyramids and chattel slavery took an extreme form here, even for the South, beginning with enslaved Chitimachas, Choctaw, Natchez, Chaoüachas, Natchez, Westo, Yamasee, Euchee, Yazoo and Tawasa peoples, then later replaced by enslaved West Africans. Literally, worked to death. This "most Southern on earth"(Cobb, 1992) was a place of ultimate terror for Black people even under slavery (the worst place to be sold off too, the place of no return, the place of premature death). Black and Native people alike were induced to raid and enslave Native tribes, as a bargain for their own freedom or to defer their own enslavibility by the British, French, and then American settlers. Abolition has its incommensurabilities.*

*The Delta is now more segregated than it was during Jim Crow in 1950 (Aiken, 1990). The rising number of impoverished, all black townships is the result of mechanization of*

[25] Source: Chang (2012).

*agriculture and a fundamental settler covenant that keeps black people landless. When black labor is unlabored, the Black person underneath is the excess.*

*Angola Farm is perhaps the more notorious of the two State Penitentiaries along the Mississippi River. Three hundred miles upriver in the upper Delta region is Parchment Farm. Both State Penitentiaries (Mississippi and Louisana, respectively), both former slave plantations, both turned convict-leasing farms almost immediately after the Civil War by genius land speculators-cum-prison wardens. After the Union victory in the Civil War 'abolished' slavery, former Confederate Major, Samuel Lawrence James, obtained the lease to the Louisiana State Penn in 1869, and then bought Angola Farm in 1880 as land to put his chattel to work.*

*Figure 1.4.* "The Cage: where convicts are herded like beasts of the jungle. The pan under it is the toilet receptacle. The stench from it hangs like a pall over the whole area" John Spivak, Georgia N_____, 1932.

*Cages on wheels. To mobilize labor on land by landless people whose crime was mobility on land they did not own. The largest human trafficker in the world is the carceral state within*

*the United States, not some secret Thai triad or Russian mafia or Chinese smuggler. The U.S. carceral state is properly called neo-slavery, precisely because it is legal. It is not simply a product of exceptional racism in the U.S.; its racism is a direct function of the settler colonial mandate of land and people as property.*

*Black Codes made vagrancy - i.e. landlessness - illegal in the Antebellum South, making the self-possessed yet dispossessed Black body a crime (similar logic allowed for the seizure, imprisonment and indenture of any Indian by any person in California until 1937, based on the ideology that Indians are simultaneously landless and land-like). Dennis Childs writes "the slave ship and the plantation" and not Bentham's panopticon as presented by Foucault, "operated as spatial, racial, and economic templates for subsequent models of coerced labor and human warehousing - as America's original prison industrial complex" (2009, p.288). Geopolitics and biopolitics are completely knotted together in a settler colonial context.*

*Despite the rise of publicly traded prisons, Farms are not fundamentally capitalist ventures; at their core, they are colonial contract institutions much like Spanish Missions, Indian Boarding Schools, and ghetto school systems*[26]*. The labor to cage black bodies is paid for by the state and then land is granted, worked by convict labor, to generate additional profits for the prison proprietors. However, it is the management of excess presence on the land, not the forced labor, that is the main object of slavery under settler colonialism.*

*Today, 85% of people incarcerated at Angola, die there.*

## Conclusion

An ethic of incommensurability, which guides moves that unsettle innocence, stands in contrast to aims of reconciliation, which motivate settler moves to innocence. Reconciliation is about rescuing settler normalcy, about rescuing a settler future. Reconciliation is concerned with questions of *what will decolonization look like? What will happen after abolition? What will be the consequences of decolonization for the settler?* Incommensurability acknowledges that these questions need not, and perhaps cannot, be answered in order for decolonization to exist as a framework.

We want to say, first, that decolonization is not obliged to answer those questions - decolonization is not accountable to settlers, or settler futurity. Decolonization is accountable to Indigenous sovereignty and futurity. Still, we acknowledge the questions of those wary participants in Occupy Oakland and other settlers who want to know what decolonization will require of them. The answers are not fully in view and can't be as long as decolonization remains punctuated by metaphor. The answers will not emerge from friendly understanding, and indeed require a dangerous understanding of uncommonality that un-coalesces coalition politics - moves that may feel very unfriendly. But we will find out the answers as we get there, "in the

[26] As we write today, Louisiana has moved to privatize all of its public schools http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/01/louisiana-makes-bold-bid-_n_1563900.html

exact measure that we can discern the movements which give [decolonization] historical form and content" (Fanon, 1963, p. 36).

To fully enact an ethic of incommensurability means relinquishing settler futurity, abandoning the hope that settlers may one day be commensurable to Native peoples. It means removing the asterisks, periods, commas, apostrophes, the whereas's, buts, and conditional clauses that punctuate decolonization and underwrite settler innocence. The Native futures, the lives to be lived once the settler nation is gone - these are the unwritten possibilities made possible by an ethic of incommensurability.

> *when you take away the punctuation*
> he says of
> lines lifted from the documents about
> military-occupied land
> its acreage and location
> *you take away its finality*
> *opening the possibility of other futures*
>
> -Craig Santos Perez, Chamoru scholar and poet
> (as quoted by Voeltz, 2012)

Decolonization offers a different perspective to human and civil rights based approaches to justice, an unsettling one, rather than a complementary one. Decolonization is not an "and". It is an elsewhere.

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